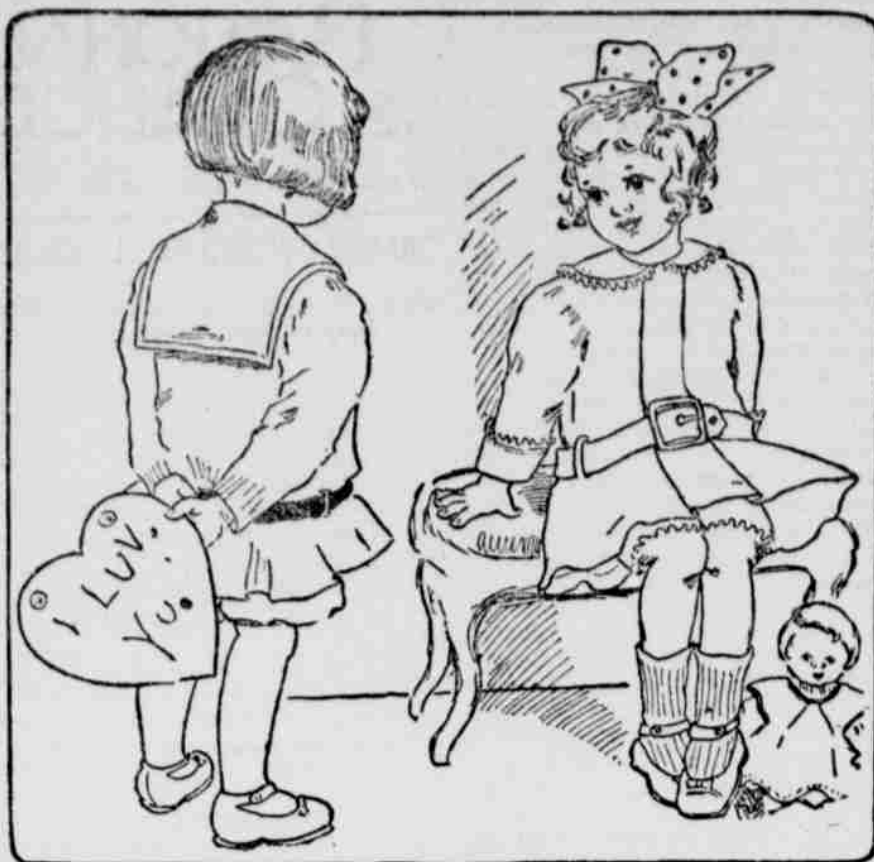


HIS FIRST VALENTINE

NOT OBSERVED AS
IN THE OLD DAYS

St. Valentine is Now Neglected,
Compared to What Was Done
Some Two Centuries Ago.

HE sending by mail of embossed tokens of love or friendship is about all there is left of the ancient customs of St. Valentine's day. The windows and play counters of our book stores and bazaars are filled at this season of the year with examples of art and near-art to an extent that should please every sort of taste in regard to valentines. There is a day or two of fun and merry chatter when the tokens are received, or of even more boisterous mirth if the valentines are "comic;" here and there a valentine party is given by the young people, then the celebrating ceases and is forgotten.

Not so a couple of centuries ago. Then the festivities were much more in the character of observance and ceremonies. The origin of St. Valentine's day is credited to different incidents. One writer of ancient social customs says that it originated with Mme. Royale, daughter of Henry IV., of France. The lady, having built a splendid palace near Turin, desired to name it for some good saint, and finally chose St. Valentine. Thus the edifice was called "The Valentine," and at the initial entertainment given in the great drawing rooms, Mme. Royale conceived the idea of causing her guests to pair off by means of a lottery.

Ladies Drew From Lot.
The names of the men were written on slips of paper and folded. The ladies then drew from the list, and whoever each one drew was to be her "valentine" for the space of one year. At the various balls which this gay-spirited young princess gave during the season it was understood that each lady should receive a bouquet from her chosen lover, and that at every tournament the trappings of a knight's horse should be furnished by his allotted lady, with this proviso—that the lady eventually receive whatever prize he might win. Mme. Royale, however, would not herself enter into this lottery, but reserved the privilege of choosing her "valentine" independently.

Doubtless it is true that this lady did originate this custom at her palace in Turin, but it is also quite as true that this was not the real origin of St. Valentine's day, for it is alluded to by English poets before her time. Lydgate, a monk, who died in the year 1440, and who has been described as "the poet of his monastery," wrote a poem in praise of Queen Catherine, consort of Henry V., of England, in which he mentioned the observance of St. Valentine's day and the custom of "drawing lots."

Indeed, this custom seems to have been a very ancient one, and continued to comparatively modern times. An equal number of young men and women would meet together on the eve of St. Valentine's day and hold a lottery, in which the names of both men and women were drawn; thus each maid and bachelor would have two "valentines," who were required to make mutual gifts. This, of course, occasioned any amount of mirth and some funny situations.

Other Superstitions.

One superstition which held good until quite recent times was that the first young man or young woman one chanced to meet on the morning of Valentine's day would be one's valentine. Other superstitions included mystic rites, particularly in Scotland, which enabled maidens to learn who would be their future husbands. About the middle of the eighteenth century one young woman—according to the historian of social customs of that time—wrote as follows:

"Last Friday was Valentine's day, and I'll tell you what I did the night before. I got five bay leaves, plained four of them to the four corners of my pillow and the fifth to the middle, for, if I dreamt of my sweetheart, Betty

said we would be married before the year was out. But to make more sure, I boiled an egg hard, took out the yolk and filled the egg with salt, and when I went to bed I ate it, shell and all, without speaking or drinking after it, and this was also to have effect with the bay leaves. We also wrote our love names upon bits of paper and rolled them up in clay and put them into water, and the first that rose was to be our valentine. Would you think it? Mr. Blossom was my man, and I lay abed and shut my eyes all the morning till he came to our house, for I would not have seen another man before him for all the world."

Children Chanted Songs.

This quaint letter shows how the idea of the powers of St. Valentine were appreciated by the maidens of that time. It was customary in the old times for maidens to hang their shoes outside the window on the eve of St. Valentine's day in order that their love affairs should prosper, although the explanation of this belief is not given. Children also went about chanting songs about Valentine and collecting coins as their valentines.

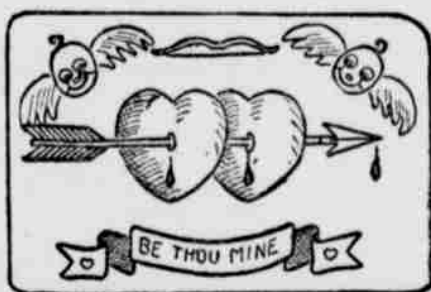
The valentine gifts of those days were sometimes very costly, including jewels, rings, brooches, silken sashes, or belts with bejeweled buckles, silk gloves with rich embroidery, and other expensive presents which a man might make to his "valentine."

St. Valentine's day was alluded to by Shakespeare and Chaucer, and one of the earliest known writers of valentines was Charles, duke of Orleans. Drayton, a poet of Shakespeare's time, also wrote charming verses along this theme.

What connection the martyred Bishop Valentine had to do with these customs is not known, but a story of the death of the good bishop, which occurred in the third century, was a most cruel one. He was first beaten with clubs and then beheaded. Thus it seems paradoxical that the commemoration of him should be observed in the gayest of fashions, and always in conjunction with the pranks of the little god of love.

Many learned historians have given considerable time and investigation to the origin of the romantic observance of St. Valentine's day, but the secret is still a secret—the real mystery is still unsolved.

TWO VALENTINES



I sent my love a valentine,
And with it sent a kiss.
It bore the message, "Be thou mine,"
And looked about like this:



My love sent me a valentine,
But oh, the saucy miss!
Instead of saying, "I am thine,"
It looked about like this:

Many Customs of the Day.
The making of paper valentines began in Germany quite a long time ago, but in many parts of the world people still weave couplets of flowers and wreaths of leaves for valentine. The Balkan States have many pretty and graceful customs, connected with the giving of flowers on St. Valentine's day.

The Valentine

By WILBUR D. NISBIT

In days of old a valentine
Was made of parchment, fold on fold,
And in quaint language, "I am thine,"
Was the soft message that it told.
Twas written in a stately style,
And ornamented with a scroll,
And vowed his beauty could beguile
A monkish soul.

Then later came the flowered things,
Bedecked with cups and with doves
Which bore upon their spreading wings
The burden of undying loves.
Ah, such impassioned lyrics, too,
Concealed from undesired gaze!
'Twas the accepted way to woo
In those old days.

Again the fashion changed, and then,
Mistake for must have a fan,
Or fine remembrance sent her when
A valentine she needs must scan.
Anonymous—yet deftly sent
So that she knew the source full well.
And chose to crush the sentiment
The gift must tell.

Once more the fashion changed, and so
The valentine was changed likewise
Into a thing of shewn and show
Meant for a lovely lady's eyes.
It told of how the sender felt
When he was pierced by Cupid's dart;
The valentine whereon 'twas spelt
Looked like a heart.

Today another style is here:
The man who vain would woo and win
Assures the lady that she's dear
With quite a grim, sarcastic grin.
He sends a valentine today,
Saucy lace, sans flowers and sans verse—
He speeds a missile on its way
Shaped like a purse.

LOVE IS NEVER BLIND

Little God May Do Strange
Things, but His Eyesight Is
of the Best.

BEFORE Miriam became engaged to marry Fred she had heard much and read more about love. "Love" is this; "love" is that; "love" is the other thing. "Love" gives all; "love" demands sacrifice; "love" spells happiness; "love" means misery, and so on through a long list of possible and impossible conditions.

Being a perfectly normal man, Fred had certain faults.

Some of them were glaring, but Miriam, if she saw them at all, forgave them because she loved him.

A friend said: "Miriam, I don't see how you can endure Fred. He's so full of faults. But I suppose love is blind and you don't notice his shortcomings."

Then it was that Miriam consulted Aunt Anna.

"Is love blind, auntie, dear?" said she. "Or does it give one an insight into the real charm and goodness unseen by others?"

"That depends, child, upon the kind of love, and also upon the individual."

"Surely from the many 'misfits,' the many unsuitable matches we see, I am inclined to say that love is not only blind, but deaf and dumb as well. You remember, my dear, Jim Merlyn, an avowed worshiper of beauty, married Ellen Short, one of the homeliest girls in the village."

"We see beautiful women marrying perfect frights—coarse, ignorant men and the scarcely can pick up a passionless story of an heiress eloping with a chauffeur or groom, a boy marrying a woman old enough to be his grandmother, or a sweet young debutante selling herself to the ancient millionaire."

"It seems to me the only way we can account for these vagaries of sentiment is that Cupid has suddenly been struck blind, or a long-distance telescope enables him to see charms and perfections in individuals that are quite invisible to the rest of the world," replied the younger.

"Miriam, you have often said of your own friends: 'I cannot tell what on earth she sees in that man to love; he's such an impossible person.' No doubt some of your friends say the same thing of you and Fred."

"Thus we go on pondering over this mystery of love—love that comes without invitation, and sometimes goes we know not where."

"I think, dear, the truth of the matter is that love between a man and woman is purely a matter of attraction, and that neither eyesight nor judgment plays any part whatever."

"We love or we hate by instinct. It is not a matter of head, but of the heart."

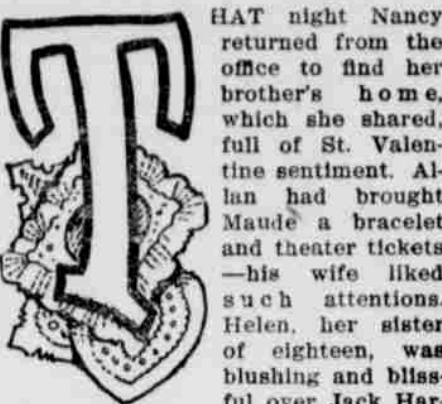
"A woman may observe in a man every admirable quality, yet she cannot love him; yet the man who possesses many faults which she plainly sees may win her love without even trying to."

"Men, you know, are curious animals. One may pass by a woman who is endowed with all the virtues, the accomplishment and the charm of femininity, yet will marry a crude little butterfly of fashion with no claim either to good looks or wisdom."

AT THE VALENTINE BALL



Forgotten quite are all his clubs
Where spades are spades, all right.
He's given Belle a diamond ring.
And hearts are trumps tonight.

A
VALENTINE
HEART
By Joanna Single

HAT night Nancy returned from the office to find her brother's home, which she shared, full of St. Valentine's sentiment. Alan had brought Maude a bracelet and theater tickets—his wife liked such attentions.

Helen, her sister of eighteen, was blushing and blissful over Jack Harlan's extravagance in valentines; even Baby May had come from the kindergarten with her fat hands full of lace-paper hearts. And it was the maid's afternoon off, so Maude asked Nancy if she would mind washing the dinner things. And would she be lonely if they all went out and left her with May, already asleep?

Nancy did not mind the dishes or being alone—she saw too many people downtown to want them at night. She thought of her unfinished book and a quiet place by the sitting room fire. However, as she buttoned Maude's theater waist up the back, and later helped Helen pin her mass of valentines to her white party dress, and saw them all off, she felt alone—the odd one.

She had caught a glimpse of her rather worn face in the glass over Maude's shoulder, and missing its fine strength, saw only the record of twenty-nine years in it. What had been ailing her lately?

With her characteristic refusal to procrastinate, she sat down in the dusk to think it out. She was not going to permit herself to grow into a state of discontent or unhappiness. Certainly every one was kind to her at home—and in the office.

Suddenly she frowned. Perhaps she was letting Flossie, the new stenographer, get on her nerves. The girl,



dimpled, curly-headed, silly, was too obviously trying to attract her employer's attention. Nancy reflected that it was none of her business, but no woman likes a sister woman to make a fool of herself—and no woman can be a man's private secretary for six years without having an interest in his welfare. John Steele deserved a better mate than that—and yet Nancy knew that strong men, past their first youth, were prone to make just such a mistake.

She shook herself free of the thought and returned to herself. The plain fact was that her business gave her little time to cultivate her old friends, mostly married now and engaged in their own affairs. Her brother was wrapped up in his business and family. She, Nancy, was too much alone, growing too introspective. She was losing her individuality and independence, and needed to take more care of herself, mentally and physically.

Still in her black office dress, with its white collar and cuffs, she stretched out a little in the big chair by the fireplace where the fire was low, and, not wanting the lights, sat thinking.

She put up her hands in a fashion of her childhood and rumbled her heavy brown hair, usually so trim; her sweet, steady gray eyes filled with tears, which she promptly suppressed. Self-pity, she thought, was the last straw of humiliation! Why should she be sorry for herself? If the office liked her, why not take a rest? Her grandmother had, with the year past, left her a little money. She would resign. Why had she not thought of it before? Flossie could take her place, and she would travel and find broader interests.

Then it came upon her how much John Steele had been in her mind, and she thought it out with herself on the spot. She would not, simply because she was lonely, let herself fall in love with the only attractive man near her own age whom she saw much of—and her employer, at that. That was too banal! What would he say when she resigned? Would he care? He was not so foolish! No; he had showed her every courtesy in the office—the same courtesy he showed to all women, but never the little light attentions he showed even to Flossie, to whom, that very morning, he had,

on entering, tossed a smile and a rose as one would a ball to a kitten.

The girl was so soft and pretty—he could not be blamed. But she, Nancy, would straightway resign before she made a fool of herself. It was high time.

It had grown dark in the room, and she was still lost in planning for the coming year when the doorbell roused her. Flushed and startled, not stopping even to smooth her hair, she went into the hall, where the light burned low. She opened the door.

She did not realize that it was John Steele till he asked, with an attempt at lightness, if he might see Miss Stanton, Miss Nancy Stanton.

"She welcomes you," she answered, lightly enough, deciding he had called to talk business—he often asked her advice, and she knew he had some important matters under consideration. She bade him enter, and he followed her into the sitting room, where she turned on the lights, half blinding herself by the sudden glow. She pointed to the big chair where she had been



sitting, and then began to resuscitate the fire; but in his mastering way he put her aside and went at it himself. Then he turned and faced her, noting her flush, her lovely disordered hair, her bright, steady eyes. But she returned his gaze, making herself rise to the situation, as he questioned her. "What were you doing in the dark? Where is your family?"

"It's St. Valentine's day, and they're out junketing. As to what I was doing, Mr. Steele, if you must know, I was resigning my secretaryship with you. Just as you rang I was wording it—wondering whether to be business-like and polite, or to say simply, 'I'm tired of working for you. I want to go abroad this spring, and I intend to do it—let Flossie have my place!'"

She held up her head and smiled at him. Why couldn't the man say something instead of staring at her?

"You anticipate me," he replied gravely. "I came to discharge you. I don't think I can—keep you in the office any longer. In fact, Nancy, he stammered like a boy, 'I can't bear the sight of you in that office a moment longer! Oh, can't you see what a sentimental fool you have made of me? What are you going to do with me? See what I did today—wait a moment!'"

He went into the hall while she stood half dazed. What was he trying to say, and bungling it, too, this clear-headed man of business? Was he jesting? He returned with a purple box, which he handed her.

"See—valentines! The thought of you made me buy them and wonder all day if I dared bring them to you! And here!" He drew something from his pocket. "Here is a lace-paper heart surrounded with doves and roses! Would you mind taking that, too, as part of my general silliness? What do you think of me?"

She was very pale now, but waited in silence. "I've done even a madder thing—brought you my heart; all I have, all



I am and ever shall be! Could you manage to work with me instead of for me? Couldn't you love me a little?—No, I mean with all your heart, for you're no halfway woman, Nancy! Will you?"

She nodded, hoping she was not going to be foolish enough to cry because she was so happy.

"I think I—could," she murmured. "I think I should like that—even better than my—present position!"

He caught her hands in his and looked at her with delight. The valentines fell unheeded to the floor and the lace-paper heart fluttered and fell just out of reach of the fire ready to lick out a lean tongue for it.

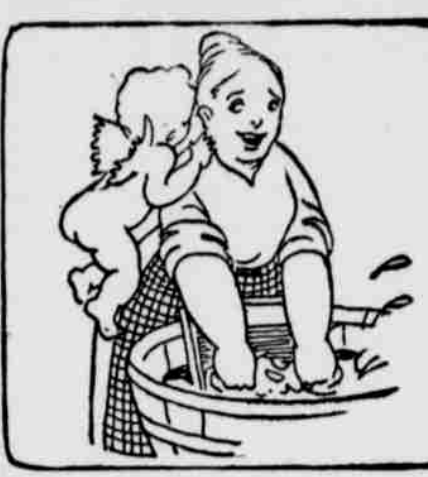
Then John Steele suddenly clasped her close in his arms as if he never would let her go. They stood a long time before the fire, then they sat down to talk about it—so many things had to be talked over.

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CUPID VALENTINE



My name is Cupid Valentine,
I pose in wintry weather,
And artists call me Trilby 'cause
I pose "the altogether."



When Mary Ellen at her tub
Receives a loving line,
I whisper low in Mary's ear:
"John sent that valentine."



And when I come the poet grips
His pen and tears his hair,
And writes a sugar-coated "poem"
Unto his lady fair.



And when I chase the skating girl
In Cupid's usual dress,
The cold compels me to regret
My hapless "Trilbyness."

TIME FOR LOVING THOUGHTS

St. Valentine's Season Should Give
Rise Only to the Holiest of the
Sentiments.

In Oriental countries a garland of flowers is hung over the garden wall. Everywhere, all over the earth, the day, whether called St. Valentine's or not, is honored with the most beautiful sentiments—the giving of a gift of love, without the thought of a return, or even of a recognition of the gift. Let us, then, be worthy of this ancient meaning of the day, and not degrade it by sending silly verses, or ugly pictures, as valentines. There are so many graceful and tasteful things that we might do instead. There is, of course, always the pretty, dainty valentines of paper, but I know of nothing so appropriate as a few flowers. Our climate does not let many of us find wild flowers by St. Valentine's day, but we can all grow a few hyacinths in a sunny window, or have a window garden of geraniums and begonias. Little baskets can be woven of dried grasses, or of crepe paper, which, when filled with green leaves and a few blossoms, will be expressive of the real sentiments of St. Valentine's day.—Exchange.

Pretty Oldtime Custom.

In colonial days, in this country, the day was not called St. Valentine's, but it was observed. People made dainty little baskets, filled them with the earliest of spring flowers, like the trailing arbutus, and hung them on door-knobs or bell-pulls. In the old engravings which are found in the greatest profusion around Richmond, Va., and Philadelphia, one can often see the little maid of that time in a "scoop" bonnet, a flowered muslin, and demure little black mitts, slipping up to the old door, with its knocker and wide "door-seat," to hang the little basket of flowers for some friend.

YOUR HAIR NEEDS
PARISIAN SAGE

Unightly—matted—colorless—scraggy hair made—fluffy—soft—abundant and radiant with life at once. Use Parisian Sage. It comes in 50c. bottles.

The first application removes dandruff, stops itching scalp, cleanses the hair, takes away the dryness and brittleness, increases the beauty of the hair, making it wavy and lustrous.

Everyone needs Parisian Sage.

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Florelle Pattern Sterling
silver-plated

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SATURDAY ONLY!

Tablespoons 10c each
Teaspoons . . . 10c each
Forks 10c each
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—Just the thing for
every day wear.

Brown's Bazaar

Valentines

Valentine
Greetings

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Booklets

A Complete Line

Grover's Drug Store
"THE REXALL STORE"

Martin's
Calf Food

25 LB. SACK \$1.00

A substitute for milk—like
Mellen's food for babies.

Stock Food

Any Dollar Package, 90c.

Alma Flour & Feed Co.

Legal Notices.

ORDER APPOINTING TIME FOR HEARING CLAIMS.

State of Michigan, The Probate Court for the County of Gratiot.
At a session of said court, held at the Probate office in the village of Ithaca in said county, on the 2nd day of January, 1914.
Present, J. Lee Potts, Judge.

In the matter of the estate of Addie VanValkenburg, deceased.

The above estate having been admitted to probate and Bartlett VanValkenburg of Alma, Michigan, appointed executor thereof.

It is ordered that four months from this date be allowed for creditors to present their claims against said estate and that such claims will be heard by said court on Saturday, the 2nd day of May next at ten o'clock in the forenoon.

It is further ordered that public notice thereof be given by publication of this order for three successive weeks previous to said day of hearing in The Alma Record, a newspaper printed and circulated in said county.

A true copy.
J. Lee Potts, Judge of Probate.
Belle Jenne, Clerk of Probate. 1818 t-4

ORDER APPOINTING TIME FOR HEARING CLAIMS.

State of Michigan, The Probate Court for the County of Gratiot.
At a session of said court, held at the Probate office in the village of Ithaca in said county, on the 14th day of January, 1914.
Present, J. Lee Potts, Judge.

In the matter of the estate of Mary Allen, deceased.

The above estate having been admitted to probate and F. W. Cresser, of Alma, Mich., appointed administrator thereof.

It is ordered that four months from this date be allowed for creditors to present their claims against said estate and that such claims will be heard by said court on Thursday, the 14th day of May, at ten o'clock in the forenoon.

It is further ordered that public notice thereof be given by publication of this order for three successive weeks previous to said day of hearing in The Alma Record, a newspaper printed and circulated in said county.

A true copy.
J. Lee Potts, Judge of Probate.
Belle Jenne, Clerk of Probate
First insertion Jan. 15)